



March 1999

PARTNERS FOR GATEWAY

Together, we can solve environmental problems with communities in common-sense ways

Who are the Gateway Partners?

- U.S. EPA (Regions 5 and 7)
- Illinois EPA (Illinois EPA)
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
- East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP)
- East St. Louis Community Action Committee (ESL CAN)
- East St. Louis Housing Authority
- Missouri Department of Health
- U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Illinois Attorney General's Office
- St. Clair County Sheriff's Department
- New Spirit
- Neighbors United for Progress
- Mississippi River Basin Alliance
- Stop Polluting Illinois (SPILL)
- St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office
- Scott Air Force Base
- Solutia (Monsanto)



Gateway area house benefits from EPA cleanup.

Background

The Gateway Initiative (Gateway) provides a forum to address local environmental issues. Gateway was created by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), along with other Federal, State, and local agencies concerned about environmental issues in southern Illinois. The governmental agencies work with local citizens, environmental groups, and others to provide creative, common-sense solutions to environmental problems.

This fact sheet provides information about on-going activities in the Gateway region.

NL Taracorp Site Update

U.S. EPA has completed the majority of the cleanup in the Venice Township alleys and Eagle Park areas, and the residential areas have undergone cleanup activities since 1994.

U.S. EPA is into the fifth year of the cleanup, and is pleased to report that more than 1,100 homes have been cleaned to date.

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NL Taracorp Residential Cleanup to Cease

Residential cleanup work is expected to cease on June 30, 1999. Once cleanup has ceased, there will be no opportunity for residents to request their yard be tested or cleaned up. This map indicates the areas that are being addressed (inside the highlighted areas). If your home is within the highlighted area, and you would like to have your yard tested and cleaned if necessary, please contact either the following U.S. EPA officials or ENTACT:

Noemi Emeric
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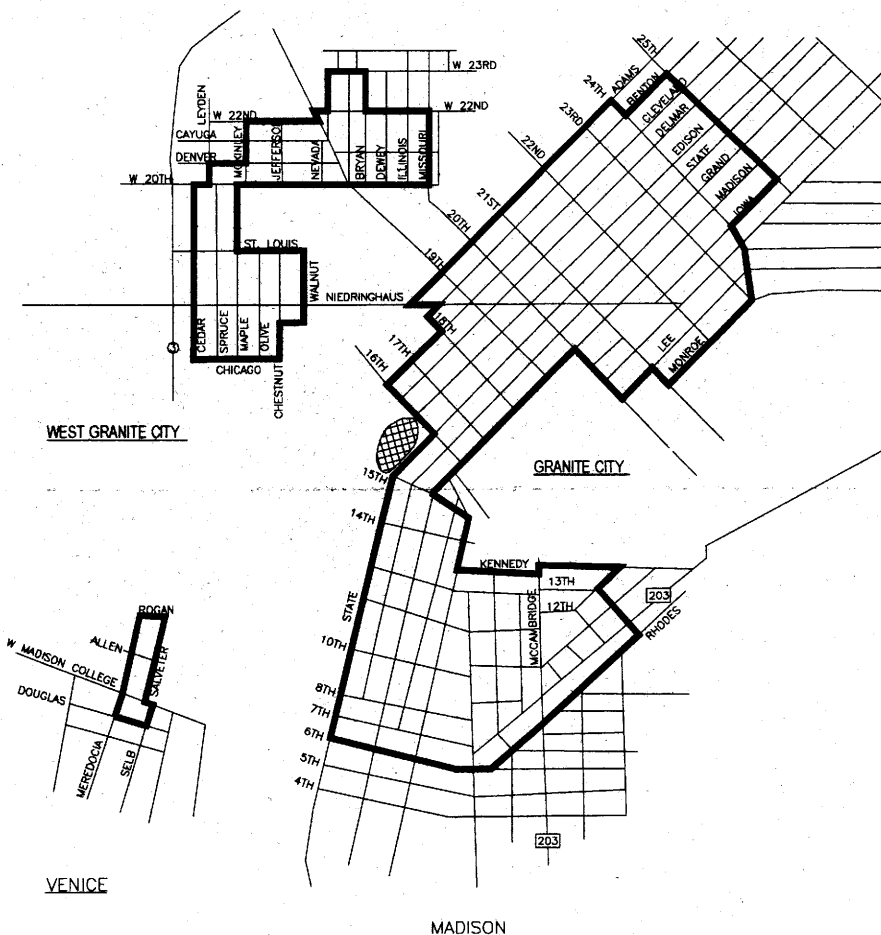
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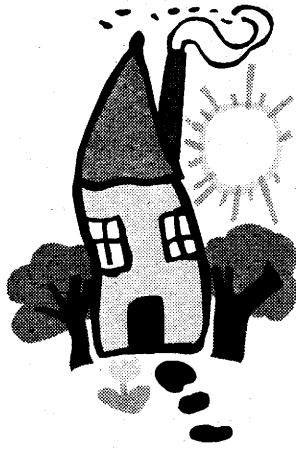
The above may be reached
toll-free at (800) 621-8431,
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM (C.S.T.),
Monday-Friday.

ENTACT may be reached during
business hours at (618) 876-7216.

For site-related emergencies contact,
ENTACT at (618) 398-9518.



On July 13, 1998, the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) took over the clean up of the site and hired ENTACT, Inc. (ENTACT) to perform the cleanup activities at the residential properties. PRPs are companies or individuals considered potentially responsible for contamination problems at a Superfund site. Prior to that, residential cleanup activities were conducted by OHM Remediation Services under contract with and the direct supervision by the Army Corps of Engineers and paid for by U.S. EPA under the Superfund authority.



U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will continue to oversee the on-going residential cleanup activities even though **federal funds are no longer being used.**

On-Going NL Taracorp Site Activities

Residential lead-contaminated soil excavation and restoration activities are on-going throughout Granite City and Madison neighborhoods. To date, ENTACT has fully cleaned and restored 267 properties. ENTACT crews are currently cleaning and restoring approximately 60 lots per month. The average property is excavated in one day and backfilled and sodded within three days of excavation. Approximately 463 properties will require cleanup within the next several months. All properties are expected to be tested and cleaned, if necessary, by June, 30, 1999.

Other work on-going is the lead-capping project. U.S. EPA issued an approval letter for ENTACT to begin preparing for the capping work of the Taracorp pile in December 1998. Physical construction of the cap should start in the Spring of 1999.

The final number of properties that are anticipated to be cleaned is 1,300, however this number may

change due several variables. The variables are the total number of properties in the cleanup zones (the number of these homes which will require cleanup is based on testing results), the number of homes where no contact has been made, and the number of homes that initially denied access, but are now requesting to be sampled.

Because of these variables, it is difficult to predict the completion date, however the expected date, as stated earlier, is June 30, 1999.

Brownfields Project Complete in East St. Louis

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has successfully completed another Brownfields project for the City of East St. Louis. Brownfields are parcels of property which were formerly used as industrial or commercial operations, but are now underutilized or abandoned. This Brownfields site was a heavily contaminated site located on abandoned property across from the East St. Louis City Hall on River Park Drive. This project began when the City requested Illinois EPA assistance with an investigation of the property through a U.S. EPA grant. Through a collaborative

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effort between the City, a developer, and Illinois EPA, a workable solution for redevelopment that met everyone's expectations was accomplished. The City will transfer the site to the Union Bank of East St. Louis for construction of a banking facility.

Cleanup Complete at J & R Landfill

Efforts to correct problems from odor, erosion and uncovered waste at the J & R Landfill site south of Belleville, except for the permanent grass cover, are complete.

The J & R Landfill was an improperly closed landfill which operated from 1969 to 1990 south of Belleville. In the years since the landfill was abandoned, the St. Clair County Health Department and Illinois EPA documented numerous violations of environmental regulations including uncovered waste, erosion, and odor problems. Rain water was also ponding on the surface, seeping into the landfill, and creating leachate problems. Leachate is the liquid created when water mixes with waste.



The site owner and operator declared bankruptcy in 1994, and despite a lawsuit filed by the St. Clair County State's Attorney, the owner provided little money to pay for the necessary closure and repair work at the site.

In early 1998, the St. Clair County Board and Illinois EPA agreed on a unique plan to combine funds from several sources to pay for cleanup work at the site. The combined funds total \$2.6 million.

The cleanup effort began in 1998 and includes the construction of a final cap over the landfill. The cap consists of a thick layer of soil and compacted clay. The cap permanently covers the waste, prevents the escape of methane and odors, and contours the surface of the landfill so that rain water will no longer form ponds on the surface. This cap was completed in 1998. The remaining work will be completed this Spring when the permanent grass cover will be seeded.

Army Corps of Engineers Conducts American Bottoms Study

The American Bottoms study area in Madison and St. Clair Counties, lies within the Metro East St. Louis area along the east bank of the Mississippi River. It encompasses about 106,000 acres (166 square miles). After New Orleans, the American Bottoms has the second largest concentration of residential, commercial, and industrial land use on the Mississippi River floodplain. Agriculture is also

a significant land use in the Bottoms. The area was a heartland of prehistoric culture, which today is represented most dramatically by the Cahokia Mounds World Heritage Site.

The floodplain of the Mississippi River in the Metro East St. Louis area has experienced interior flooding from hillside runoff and local rainfall for many years. The interior drainage ditch system is inadequate to handle more than minor rainfall. Past efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers to develop an economically justified project in this area have been unsuccessful. For four consecutive years (1993 through 1996), the project area received a National Disaster Declaration due to flooding. Flooding during 1995 and 1996 closed transportation routes, including Interstate highway ramps. Upland watersheds adjacent to the Bottoms are experiencing rapid residential and commercial development. Watersheds are areas of land from which water drains into a common waterway. Land clearing and other factors have led to high rates of soil loss from the uplands, more intense upland runoff, and more frequent overflowing of drainage ditches in the Bottoms.

Within the Bottoms, measures will be investigated to divert and temporarily store stormwater from the drainage systems in land to enhance existing wetlands and restore of historic wetlands.

High rates of sediment buildup have also caused a significant financial strain on the local communities to operate and maintain the drainage system. Sediment buildup over the years has also deteriorated many existing wetlands and natural water bodies in the Bottoms and currently threatens additional harm. Further, the historical loss of swamps, marshes, and wet prairies located in the Bottoms - places that previously acted as temporary storage areas for local rainfall and upland runoff - to drainage improvements, agricultural use, and development appears to have been extensive.

Alternatives to be considered will address both bottomlands and uplands. Within the Bottoms, measures will be investigated to divert and temporarily store stormwater from the drainage systems in land to enhance existing wetlands and restore historic wetlands. These measures will address the 10-, 25-, 50-, 100-, and 500-year rainfall events. Upland sediment control measures will also be investigated to reduce erosion at its source.



U.S. EPA and the American Lung Association "Surf the Web" with Southwestern Illinois School Children

On November 18, 1998, U.S. EPA and the Southwestern Illinois Office of the American Lung Association (ALA) conducted an internet training session with children attending Wolf Branch School in Belleville, Illinois. After ALA gave an opening presentation regarding the effects of ozone in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, the children logged onto the internet. Then, from their Chicago Office, U.S. EPA responded to questions over the internet that the children posed from the classroom.

What made the experience both educational and exciting was the fact that the environmental discussion was driven by the latest technology. "They learn and have fun at home on the internet, why not



at school?" said Andy Anderson of U.S. EPA. Due to the program's success, both U.S. EPA and ALA arranged and participated in a second session on February 11, 1999, at Grant Middle School, Fairview Heights, Illinois. If you are interested in learning to surf the web for environmental information at your school, call Andy Anderson of U.S. EPA at 312-353-9681.

For More Information

Should you have any questions on the information in this fact sheet or seek more information on the Gateway Initiative, feel free to contact the following individuals:

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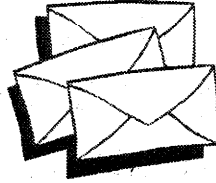
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Mailing List

If you did not receive this fact sheet in the mail, you are not on our mailing list. If you wish to be on the Gateway Initiative mailing list, please fill out this form and mail to:

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